KATRINA COLLIER

FOREWORD BY HILKE SCHELLMANN

Reboot
HIRING

THE KEY TO MANAGERS AND LEADERS

SAVING TIME, MONEY AND HASSLE

WHEN RECRUITING

WILEY

Reboot Hiring

Reboot Hiring

The Key To Managers and Leaders Saving Time, Money and Hassle When Recruiting

Katrina Collier

WILEY

For Sophie Power, my huge-hearted neurospicy friend, writing advocate, and TA attestant.

Contents

Foreword

Hiring in 2024 is heading towards a critical juncture: recruiters are overwhelmed by thousands of resumes they receive for jobs, while jobseekers complain that they have to send hundreds and hundreds of applications into a void and that most often they never hear back after submitting an application. Hiring has become a lose-lose endeavour.

I recently wrote the book, *The Algorithm: How AI Can Hijack Your Career and Steal Your Future*, showcasing how broken the hiring system is, especially in the age of AI. In the book I document the rise of AI and algorithmic hiring tools quantifying and ranking jobseekers. I uncovered actual evidence of wrongdoing in many first-generation AI hiring tools. My book revealed that not only are many AI tools broken and some have gender and racial bias, but often recruiting is as well. Hiring managers and recruiters often don't know what the most important skills and capabilities are that they should look out for and many new hires quit after joining a new company.

That's why I applaud Katrina Collier, who has taken her experience helping recruiters and talent acquisition professionals, and has written a book for the managers and leaders in the business. Her book is almost like a sequel. I discovered what is going wrong and she is taking these hard-earned lessons and is translating them into advice, so managers and leaders can do a better job, find better hires, and make the

process not suck, for themselves, their recruiters, and for jobseekers.

She lays out how we can fix the process with the humans in the middle: starting with recruiters and hiring managers working together to fix the dreaded job description, with clear goals and deadlines.

I love Katrina for giving actionable and meaningful insights, even going so far as sharing specific tools one can use and detailing which processes might work, down to the best questions managers and leaders can ask to understand what exactly they need in a new recruit. She also advises letting talent acquisition professionals sit in on job interviews, so that they gain a deeper understanding of the role. She even recommends what kind of assessments companies should use and which to avoid and has a nifty checklist of all the tools and questions to ask, at the end of the book.

Her recommendations will undoubtedly help recruiters, hiring managers, and jobseekers to all have a better experience! A more human, thoughtful experience, which is needed in the hiring field, which is bound for a major reckoning, since more and more jobseekers now use algorithmic tools to automatically apply – leading to even more application overload on the recruiter side.

I hope Katrina's advice will be helpful to all managers and leaders so they partner better with talent acquisition and that this trickles down to the jobseekers, a start to a much-needed reboot.

Hilke Schellmann
Emmy award winning investigative journalist,
Author of *The Algorithm*, and Assistant Professor
of Journalism at New York University

Introduction

Technology Won't Fix Your Hiring.
But You Can

Managers and leaders want an easy fix. They want to believe that technology will provide an effortless way to reduce the cost and hassle of talent acquisition. They think they can automate it because they assume it takes little more than an interview to recruit successfully. Some are so blissfully unaware of what it truly takes to hire great people that they also believe prospective employees will willingly hand their career to an emotionless bot.

People are peculiar, fabulously so, and recruiting them isn't straightforward. In *Reboot Hiring*, I offer an alternative based on my 21 years of experience: a free solution within your control. I will show you that implementing technology without fixing human-created problems already hinders hiring. I will agitate your reality and show you that fixing these human issues is the only way to save time, money, and hassle when recruiting.

The choice is yours.

In preparation for writing this, I searched for books on the human collaboration and communication issues that impede hiring, but I couldn't find any. In some ways, this makes sense; talent acquisition is a relatively new function that is evolving rapidly. Many managers and leaders are unaware of this pace of change, the enormous opportunity, or their value. Instead, they treat them as a costly

service, an inconvenience best avoided, unaware that this self-sabotaging behaviour makes recruiting clunky, expensive, and wasteful.

Technology also won't fix managers' and leaders' inability (or even unwillingness) to articulate who they need to hire. Poorly written job descriptions become vague job advertisements, barely standing out in the noise generated by 5 billion internet users. They attract few and unsuitable applicants. Time is wasted reviewing and assessing irrelevant people while the manager or leader silently hopes they will "know it when they see it". Bias creeps in, frustration rises, and time and costs escalate. *And it is all avoidable*.

Alas, you won't be able to fix people's struggles when writing their resumes; they are simply challenging to compose. If attempting to automate the matching of these poorly written documents against the job specification with AI, I share research that reveals why, for now, this is better left to humans. Plus, relying on technology is pointless if you are not confident in knowing who you need to hire and how to effectively keep people in the process while your competition also woos them.

To solve this, through this book, I plan to convince you of the value of partnering closely with your talent acquisition professional and spending more and wiser time at the start of the process so the whole thing becomes less tedious and wasteful. Importantly, by improving the partnership and process, your and your company's reputation won't hamper future hiring.

In the following pages, I will show you that a shift in perception and smarter use of your time will deliver an efficient, cost-effective, and stress-free hiring process for everyone.

Recruiting in 2024

In 1991, I secured my first full-time job at the National Australia Bank in Sydney through a newspaper advertisement. I began in a suburban branch run by a deeply unpleasant manager who reduced me to tears within days over a minor infraction and had the second-in-charge so stressed that she vomited each lunchtime. Of course, nobody cared about employee morale and engagement or its impact on productivity in the 1990s.

We stayed because we were afraid of not finding another job. We endured it because this was before the internet significantly impacted employment. We remained because we could not see the countless other available jobs without today's Google and online job boards. One also never left a job without another lined up – a job for life was still a thing. Thankfully, I was transferred and discovered that not all managers and leaders behaved this way.

In 2003, I relocated to London, UK, and found my way into the recruitment profession via, ironically, another newspaper advertisement. Over the last 21 years, I have experienced the enormous change in talent acquisition created first and foremost by the internet and, latterly, technology. The power dynamic shifted as people began using online job boards and joining social networks to find work and discover employers. Recruitment agents lost their secret books of contacts as companies started using LinkedIn to find and hire without them. Sourcing evolved as the curious learned to find people on niche sites and forums. Mobile and social recruiting became the buzz, just like AI is now.

The internet irreversibly opened the door to your company; it's too late to shut it. Employees and job seekers now have a voice and know that working for you and

your company is a choice. It is naïve to think that applicants won't be looking at your social footprint, either. The power is theirs: it will never again be a company's, as bitter a pill as that truth is for some leaders to swallow.

Today, people don't have to tolerate poor management or leadership when they can browse on their phones for a new job. As they search, they can hear from employees directly; there are no more polished C-suite statements to deceive them; they can find the truth. Company reputations matter; CEO ratings impact applications. Standing out in the posts of billions of internet users is challenging for companies. Until they mess up, that is. Today a viral TikTok video can quickly destroy an employer's brand, making current and future hiring hard and losing them applicants and clients.

In these pages, I share many examples of the transparency created by the internet so you can learn from them and avoid similar costly mistakes. You will see Glassdoor reviews and posts from Blind, and though my love-hate relationship with Reddit's Recruiting Hell is intense, I chose its posts because they illustrate problems I hear about repeatedly from job seekers. Besides a few outliers, it is a supportive community of 631,000 members sharing their job-seeking experiences. You may wish to disregard negative posts or reviews as petty, but I chose examples that clearly show the power of employees' and job seekers' voices and their reluctance to endure mistreatment in 2024. I wish I'd had such a community 33 years ago.

What Awaits

Perhaps it is because I am Australian, and over two decades in the UK haven't softened that. Maybe it is because

I champion the underdog: the poor candidate stuck in the hiring process. Perhaps it is because I respect your irreplaceable time and that you chose to purchase this book. But I don't hold back from asking tough questions or making bold, reasoned statements in these pages. I believe, on some level, all managers and leaders know that people are their differentiator and that they could do this hiring malarkey better.

Due to the internet and, often, the use of the wrong technology, talent acquisition has become overly complex and arduous. It doesn't need to take such an emotional toll on the people running its gauntlet – people who end up down or depressed, or worse. It doesn't need to cause burnout for the talent acquisition professionals caught in the middle. And it doesn't need to be a chore you avoid or loathe, as many in talent acquisition tell me you do!

The companies I witness consistently hiring and – critically – retaining great people treat their recruiters as close hiring partners, spend more time at the beginning confidently articulating who they need, run interview processes that are sensible and respectful, interview fewer and more suitable people, and don't hate it. This could be you, too.

Most of my work is with companies, managers, and talent acquisition, so this book leans that way. If you don't have a talent acquisition function and work with agents, substitute "agency recruiter" when you read "talent acquisition partner" because partnering with them effectively and thoroughly articulating the need is still crucial. If HR or procurement prevent you from directly communicating with their vetted list of agents – without valid business reasons – resolve this for the sake of current and future hiring.

In these pages, you will also discover why current technology does not have the capacity to replace recruiters and

why it will never solve the actual reason hiring fails: communication and collaboration. If that's your plan, stop and read this first; it could save you from making an unwise investment that costs you both candidates and customers.

You are busy, but skip ahead at your peril. I have been succinct without losing key elements, and this book only works if you understand the moving parts. It may be tempting to bypass chapters where the title doesn't resonate or you think you have a grasp of the topic, but humour me and read the many gems I have tucked away in the stories and examples. Except for the last chapter, which you could read at any point, the rest are best read in order, so I can leave you with the formula to save time, money, and hassle when hiring.

Ready to reboot your hiring?

1

Recruitment Alignment Meeting

"Oh no! What is this meeting in my calendar? I don't have time for this! It's all on the job description. What do they want? Go away!"

Have you ever thought this when someone from Talent Acquisition tries to schedule time with you? If so, you are far from alone if the idea of attending this meeting fills you with dread because you already have enough on your plate. Nor will you be the first manager or leader to find recruiting people for your team challenging, even scary, and wish it was less hassle.

I penned this book for managers and leaders who dislike, perhaps even hate, hiring as a way to give it a reboot. I plan to convince you that this meeting makes or breaks the entire hiring process. Getting it right, or even 50% better, will make the whole thing less loathsome and tedious. Heck, you might even enjoy this meeting when you learn why it matters, what to take, why it's the key, how to confidently articulate who you need, and how much time, money, and hassle you can save by creating a solid hiring partnership.

But Should You Be Hiring?

I know! This is an unexpected change of thought. Here you are with the sign-off to hire a new team member, and I am asking you to pause. Even now, it is worth pondering this question for a moment.

The 2020s have been a rollercoaster for employees! Countless companies over-downsized in an unprecedented pandemic, and too many overhired in 2021 into 2022, which led to layoff upon layoff from mid-2022 to now, early 2024. That's before considering the companies that implemented technology and transformation, which created even more

layoffs. With this in mind, expect an exceptional recruiter to challenge you on the hiring need, because should you be hiring externally at all?

Damaging Layoffs

A compassionate talent acquisition professional won't want to mess with people's lives. People aren't numbers on a spreadsheet; they are not a commodity. They are human beings with thoughts, feelings, and emotions. Layoffs are linked to a greater risk of suicide and mortality in the decades after being cut, and employees without existing health conditions are 83% likely to develop one in the 15 to 18 months after redundancy – stress-related illnesses like hypertension, heart disease, and arthritis.[1] This is before considering the drop in employee morale and the damage to the mental health of the remaining employees who fear they, too, will be cut.

In a transparent search-engine-led world, you must also consider the harm redundancies have on your employer and consumer brands. Take the January 2024 round of layoffs at Wayfair, which included the termination of Andrena Mcmayo, who received awareness of the situation while on her way to chemotherapy.[2] To the company: a number on a spreadsheet and a confession of overhiring from the CEO. To everyone who saw the posts online, i.e. future Wayfair customers: a woman with stage 4 metastatic breast cancer fighting for her life who now has to somehow pay for her medical insurance while jobless.

Unsurprisingly, just 36% of employees say they approve of Wayfair's CEO on Glassdoor, a drop of 40% since 2021, possibly due to his December 2023 inference to the press that he has lazy employees or the poor hiring decisions that led to yet another round of layoffs.[3, 4] The publicity gets

worse, too, with videos like 'Wayfair's Shameful Layoff –
Can You Lose Your Job on Disability Leave?' appearing
on YouTube.[5] At the time of writing, it had received over
52k views and hundreds of comments from former custom-
ers and employees in just eight days. I will no longer shop
at Wayfair, and am not the only one with this sentiment.
Tiempos DePaz added in the comments, 'Wayfair has gone
downhill, and I used to purchase a lot from them often. This
is the nail in the coffin.'

The cycle of overhiring and mindless layoffs must stop.
The cost is too high.

In late 2022, I spoke with ServiceNow's Senior Director
of Talent Acquisition, Alia Khattab; she shared that she had
intentionally not hired two team members, even though she
had the sign-off. Reflecting on this, she told me,

> *Lots of my decisions come from instinct, but with this one, I used data
> from our game-changing Talent Intelligence function and the projections
> we had with Finance. At ServiceNow, robust operational and financial
> rigour around hiring allows us to plan resources effectively. The data
> showed that in 2023, we would be hiring at half the headcount growth
> we had during the post-COVID bubble; balancing my team productivity
> and headcount growth for FY23, it was clear that we would be above
> capacity. Therefore, I consciously decided to cancel my two additional
> hires, which was the best decision for our team.*

Toby Culshaw, author of *Talent Intelligence: Use Business
and People Data to Drive Organizational Performance*, advises
companies:

> *Conduct thorough labour market research before expanding your work-
> force; overhiring without foresight risks jobs. Assessing labour market
> trends, availability of required skills, and projected hiring needs will
> inform a smarter talent acquisition strategy. Rushing into overhiring
> can leave a company overstaffed when business contracts and necessitate*

painful layoffs. Doing your labour market homework before ramping up helps prevent the high costs of hiring, training and then cutting employees. Talent Intelligence allows building a workforce that scales judiciously with actual demand.[6]

Internal Hires

Recruiting internally first is wise; it is more cost-effective, and the individual's performance and productivity are proven. Also, a 2011 study by Professor Matthew Bidwell found that new external recruits have significantly lower performance evaluations for the first two years, are paid 18–20% more, and have higher exit rates than promoted employees. Though they also bring more experience and education, hence the higher salary, and are promoted faster.[7]

Retention   Ignoring the visibility issues across large companies, which internal mobility software can assist with, the attitudes of managers and leaders often hinder internal transfers. Some feel that they own their team members; they are bogged down in the weeds instead of looking at the benefit to the company of retaining a star employee. This behaviour creates resentment and a restless employee who will soon be perusing the internet for their next role, while their lack of motivation impacts those around them. In fact, a 2023 study from Culture Amp found that 52% of people leave organisations for development opportunities, so don't stand in the way of a team member's internal transfer if it means they'll stay.[8]

Before you contemplate recruiting externally, consider internal options. Who has transferable skills? Who is smart enough to pick up something new? Would the company benefit from backfilling a role and retaining this particular employee? These are the questions to consider.

On hiring internally, Alia Khattab added, 'Internal employees with the potential to succeed should be fast-tracked through the hiring process. If your internal employee is 70% there, appropriate learning and coaching will soon bridge the 30% gap. That's a win-win for talent retention and growth.'

Side Note: Benchmarking Employee Experience and Human-Centred Designer Steve Usher warns against benchmarking externally when the plan is to fill the role internally.

> *Though a manager or leader may seek validation on their thinking regarding an internal candidate, want to compare skills gaps and cost differences, or make the business case, using company resources to interview, for the sole purpose of benchmarking, is not free. It is also unkind to inflict the emotional rollercoaster of an interview process on an individual who will never be hired, someone who could become a client or speak poorly of the experience in niche networks.*

Alternatively, many companies offer benchmarking services that won't risk your or the company's reputation, and there are also free online tools to obtain salary information.

Renaming "the" Meeting

Now that you have considered these points and you are definitely hiring externally, it's time to discover the recruitment alignment meeting and its impact on your time, money, and workload.

When I polled talent acquisition and recruiters on LinkedIn about the name they use for the make-or-break meeting that starts the hiring process, I heard too many options. Unlike how they use one word, candidates, to cover prospects, applicants, interviewees, etc., the opposite is true